Al-Anon Today

YOUR E-LINK TO AL-ANON UK & ÉIRE

www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Winter 2014

READERS' FORUM – have your say

Dear Editor

I have just read my online copy of *Al-Anon Today* autumn issue, and would like to say I think the whole magazine just gets better with each new edition.

Please pass on my thanks to all the Editorial Committee for a wonderful tool to use in the Fellowship, I shall be printing many copies!

Trustee

Dear Editor

First of all I want to thank you and the Editorial Committee for bringing us a magazine again. It's great, thank you so much for your service. I'd like to give some feedback/comments for your consideration.

You asked if we thought there were too many pictures. Personally, I didn't notice any, it was the written content I focused on. Perhaps more ink is used when printing a hardcopy if photos are included but images help break articles into individual pieces.

Do you have a preferred maximum word count for submission? If so, perhaps it could be mentioned in future issues.

Sadly, the recent Alateen page was already out of date when published due to the inclusion of dates in the report. Perhaps you could include a one line sentence in future issues to advise contributors of cut off dates for submission of articles which include dates. If you need anymore help getting the magazine out, I'm happy to help in whatever way I can.

I'd also like to submit a share for consideration for inclusion as an article in a future issue.

Thanks. ***Jane – a very grateful member***

Reply from Editorial Committee

Thank you for your offer of help Jane – all support would be welcomed especially with contributions!

We do not limit the word count for submissions but we appreciate a maximum of 750 words which would represent a page and a half, otherwise some editing may be necessary, which we prefer not to do. **The ideal length is 200 to 500 words.**

A deadline date for future issues can usually be found on page 3, and is typically one month prior to publication.

Please email your comments to editor@al-anonuk.org.uk – with the subject: Readers' Forum

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Letter from the Editor

As our fourth edition of 'Al-Anon Today' goes on line, we send you the Season's Greetings and best wishes for the New Year 2015.

Sharing our experiences, keeping hopeful and remaining faithful is not easy ... but as a slogan read in an insurance office says: 'If it was easy, anybody could do it! ' Glimmers of light keep us going in the right direction.

Our first edition gave us lots of feedback and your contributions, but sadly they are now drying up. Are you putting off writing something for the magazine because you are too busy? ... Because someone else should do it? ... Because you intend to, but think next week will do?

The next edition is due on 1st March 2015, and we want 'Al-Anon Today' to do its special part in helping to give inspiration and ideas to readers and loners who can't get to meetings. Please send us your article. You may like to write in a way to help doctors, social services, the police and the media become aware of how Al-Anon can make an important contribution in the fight for recovery from alcoholism.

It has to be realised that AA is well known all over the world, but far too many have never heard of Al-Anon!!

From us all on the Editorial Committee

PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US
Deadline for next issue 1st February 2015

Contributions may be submitted by email to: editor@al-anonuk.org.uk

or by post to: The Editor at the General Service Office Address. You may choose how you sign your article, with your own name, anonymously or with a pseudonym, but please note that your full name and contact details are required with your submission. Your anonymity will be fully respected.

Articles from members present their personal views and experiences. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Al-Anon as a whole.

All sharings become the property of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. Any photos used show models and not actual Al-Anon members.

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For other Information Services in the UK & Republic of Ireland please see the website.

In Al-Anon, members do not give direction or advice to other members. Instead, they share their personal experiences and stories, and invite other members to "take what you like and leave the rest"—that is, to determine for themselves what lesson they could apply to their own lives.

Keep it Simple

As we approach the end of the year, 'Keep It Simple' is often the most challenging of Al-Anon slogans to keep uppermost in our minds. It sometimes feels as if the true spirit and meaning of Christmas is lost, as commercialism takes over and overwhelms us. No sooner are the summer holidays over than Christmas cards, decorations, Christmas food, nibbles etc., appear in the shops and the 'big sell' starts.

Some people start filling up freezers, stockpiling the mince pies and tins of sweets, and buying endless stocking fillers.

This time of year can bring financial worries and can result in a crisis as we are encouraged to spend, spend, and spend. Before we know it the budget is blown – if there ever was one! It is the time of year when we are expected to bring family and relatives together and everyone has to get on, though an excess of alcohol can often fuel family tensions.

It takes courage to break the pattern and say – "sorry, folks, but this year we are having to cut back".

Do we really need to spend £25 or more on a present for Cousin Edith who we haven't heard from all year and we're not really that fond of? Maybe this is the year to introduce 'Surprise Santa' presents with a limit of £10?

Maybe this is the year to draw lots as to who helps out in the kitchen, who lays the table, who brings wine, snacks etc., so that everyone helps out and it's not left to one or two people who end up too exhausted to enjoy the festivities themselves.

The spirit of Christmas is bringing joy to others who may well be alone and less fortunate than ourselves. Encourage children to enjoy the message of Christmas by showing an act of true kindness to someone else. Do we really need all that food, all those presents? Within 24 hours it is all over – it's just another day.

Try and 'Keep it Simple'
– it is often the simple things, the small gestures which mean the most.

Maddie C.

The Gift of Al-Anon

It could well have been over 50 years ago that, as a teenager, I went to my first Al-Anon and open AA meeting. What was shared at the meetings made very little sense to me as I didn't have any real understanding of what alcoholism was about.

As far as I was concerned both my father's drinking and then my brother's excessive drinking was not my problem but everyone else's. The effects of growing up in an alcoholic home were so negative and damaging that instead of the alcoholics doing a 'geographical' cure I was the one who moved thousands of miles away to try and get away from it all. But guess what – the effects of alcoholism and related problems just came with me!

My own personal journey to find Al-Anon finally came about 30 years ago. At long last I was beginning to get the message but unfortunately, as is sometimes the case, I soon became stuck in the 'victim' mode and along with indulging in lots of self-pity I blamed everyone else for any problems I had.

In the end it was a family crisis which made me pick up the phone to Al-Anon. I didn't know where else to turn but recognised that I needed help and as a result I went to my first meeting in London in Sloane Square. This time I wasn't 'people pleasing', but it was for my benefit and recovery.

The wisdom and tools of Al-Anon have been an integral part of my life for the past 25 years.

The meetings, the literature (*ODAT, Courage to Change* and *News & Views*) have helped me over the years. The slogans, and especially the Serenity Prayer, have even been shared and welcomed by non-fellowship friends.

Just recently I came across notes from a Chair I had given on the topic 'Let go and let God'. I used them whilst sitting by the hospital bedside of a 97-year old Al-Anon friend who wasn't able to attend the funeral of her 67 year old daughter. The miracle of Al-Anon was that I found this card with the notes inside my copy of *Courage to Change*.

'Let go and let God', and so many of the other slogans, help me to let go of the past, to try and let go of any hurt, anger and resentment. These negative feelings merely eat away inside me. When I let go and let God, I can hand over these feelings to my Higher Power and this makes space for positive thoughts of love and acceptance, which all help towards my recovery. Al-Anon is truly a gift for which I am eternally thankful. ***Deirdre***

WISE SAYINGS FROM MEMBERS:

OUCH!
... Outspoken - Unkind - Criticism - HURTS!
Florida member

I often sat in a hard chair, when I could have sat in a comfortable one.
P. – Home Counties

It is best to love everyone, even though some are hard to like!
Anon

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

It was two days before Christmas. I came home after shopping most of the day loaded down with parcels and food for the Christmas holiday.

There was my husband, sprawled out in his favourite chair after a lunchtime session, obviously feeling no pain. If I'd have had just half the money he'd spent on booze in the last few days, enjoying the 'holiday spirit' or should I say 'spirits', with his so called friends at the pub, I could've saved myself a lot of time and aggravation by not having to traipse around the discount stores to try to make ends meet once again this year.

Why was it always like this, every year seemed to be the same, everything was put on me, he couldn't even carry one bag in from the car. How I hated Christmas.

Even though I was exhausted, I started banging things about in the hope that he would wake-up. Not a chance.

My resentment built and in my frustration I started kicking the chair and eventually him, until he stirred. It was then of course the chaos started, the usual horrendous fight with half of my purchases thrown against the wall.

Eventually he stormed out the door, back to the pub I presumed, while I lay sobbing in the bedroom. I realised that I'd have to pull myself together before the children got home, so I went into the bathroom to wash my face.

Looking up into the mirror I had a moment of truth. It was definitely not him who caused the fight this time, it was me!

I always blamed him for the fights but why couldn't I just let sleeping dogs lie? I always seemed to let my temper and my resentment get the better of me. I thought of something I'd heard in my Al-Anon meeting the week before.

Why do I keep doing the same thing, acting the same way, and expecting a different result?

I made a vow that this Christmas would be different, because I would be different. I would swallow my pride, try to accept the situation, and make the best of it. I decided to focus on my children and not sideline my husband with my usual sighs and looks of disgust. I 'bit my tongue', tried not to criticise and just let him sleep and join in when he wanted to.

I'm not saying we had the perfect family Christmas that year, as it had got off to a very bad start, but it was an awful lot better than previous years. It gets better every year, I even take pride in finding a bargain!

Anon

Al-Anon is a Spiritual Programme

When I first came into these rooms almost three years ago, I was in the darkest of dark places. I had first heard of Al-Anon almost twenty years previously but decided that I didn't have time to waste on myself, I needed to stop the alcoholics from killing themselves first. So, almost twenty years later and with only one alcoholic still alive I finally crawled into an Al-Anon meeting, not knowing what to expect.

Several things stayed with me following that first meeting; to try six meetings before making my mind up if it was for me. I could take what I liked and leave the rest, and that God, a Higher Power and a Power Greater than Myself, seemed to be mentioned a heck of a lot.

At that time, I described myself as an atheist and internally I recoiled at each mention of God or a Higher Power. If I hadn't been on my knees, I wouldn't have used "take what you like and leave the rest," I would have used the door instead. How blessed I was that without even knowing it, I had a Higher Power and it was guiding me into a new way of life and a new way of thinking.

I persevered with meetings. I understand that persevere is a controversial word to use, but it is what I did. On some level I had already accepted Step One long before I ever heard it read out. So, when I heard the Steps read aloud each week, I tried to keep an open mind about them.

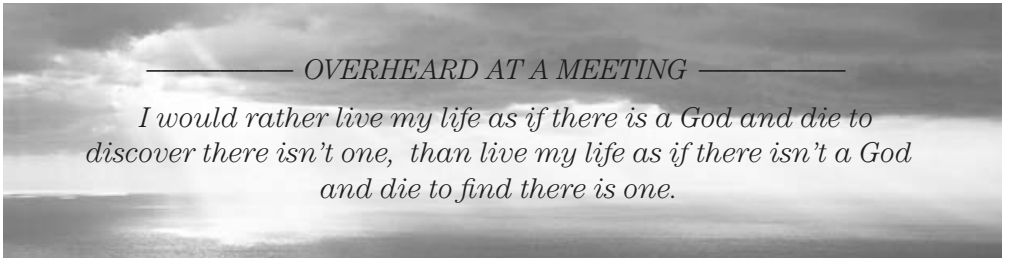
I got a sponsor and she started to help me understand about Al-Anon and the Steps.

I told her about my lack of belief in God or anything outside of myself. She told me that was okay, to keep attending meetings, to keep an open mind and that members of Al-Anon use many different things as their Higher Power.

She helped me consider many things for use as my Higher Power. She even mentioned synergy to help focus my mind when I mentioned maybe trying to use the group as a Higher Power.

I thought I was keeping an open mind but in all honesty I wasn't, I was fooling myself it was open.

Initially I used the group as my Higher Power. Things started to happen for me, I worked Step Two. I felt a real sense of


OVERHEARD AT A MEETING
I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to discover there isn't one, than live my life as if there isn't a God and die to find there is one.

achievement having managed to fully accept the first two Steps. Then I started to study Step Three but my closed mind, prevented me from taking Step Three. There was no way I was going to make a decision to turn my life or will over to the care of a group of people sat around a table!

One day on the way into our meeting my sponsor and I were talking, among other things she said to me, "Al-Anon is a spiritual programme." After the meeting I went home and thought about what she had said. The penny finally dropped for me! This wonderful programme has worked for countless people across the globe.

It wasn't going to change for me,
I was going to have to change for it!
I would have to surrender to move on.

My self-will and deep seated belief that there was nothing outside of myself would have to change, if I wanted to progress and recover.

Suddenly I realised if I could perceive of the help that the group and Al-Anon was giving me, maybe I could perceive some other spiritual help. I immediately started "acting as if."

Today I can't tell you what my Higher Power is, I don't know myself. I know what it's not and it doesn't matter to me what it is, as long as it works for me. Today I realise I've always been a spiritual person, only I didn't know it. Growing up in an alcoholic home affected me so much I didn't know who I was.

Al-Anon is helping me to slowly discover the real me and wonder of wonders, I have a loving Higher Power to rely on.

J. –a very grateful member

Suggestions for Meeting Topics

- Forgiveness
- Fear of the Alcoholic Future
- Love to Laugh *(share a smile and a joke)*
- Stinking Thinking
- Boundaries/Enabling

I Came To Al-Anon To Stop My Husband Drinking.

I came to Al-Anon to stop my husband drinking. My life was unmanageable. I was so unhappy, constantly trying to fix and control him as well as other people, places and things.

I thought I was responsible for everything and I could solve almost everything.

In Al-Anon I heard members share that the programme gave them back their life!

Also, being the child of a problem drinker I struggled to identify with this. I'd never had a personality, just merely existed. So how could I get back something I'd never had?

Today I'm so grateful that my husband's drinking resulted in my finding Al-Anon and that he too has found the AA rooms.

I hold hope that our children may also benefit from our recovery. I've also learnt that it is about me, and must begin with me! I may not have previously known my likes, dislikes or what beliefs I held, but for today I accept that, "it is what it is", and THAT'S OK.

I have been given the gift of a loving Higher Power who only wants what is best for me. This gift came during work on the Steps with my sponsor. I am now learning all about me in Step Four.

It's taken me 8 years in Al-Anon before doing Step work and once upon a time, I would have mentally beat myself up for not being good enough, and wasting time. But today I try hard not to, and tell myself: "Good enough is good enough!" I also have faith that this is all part of my Higher Power's plan for me, and that I am at the beginning of my lifelong road of recovery.

Today's reminder… "Today I will be grateful for the life I now have in recovery with the Twelve Steps of Al-Anon. I will just glimpse back to remember what it used to be like before Al-Anon. At that time I was so disfunctional and was totally unaware of it, yet believed I was almost always right."

…

"fish are oblivious to the fact that they swim in water"

from:– *From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home*

Louise D.

Amanda's Al-Anon'isms'

I recently heard this on an speaker podcast: "You can sit in the chicken shed all day, but that doesn't make you a chicken".

How true - we can't hope to recover without really working the programme. So as we say at the end of my home meeting: **"Keep coming back, it works if you work it, it won't if you don't, so work it, you're worth it."** Now say it again!

Amanda (Area 6 - Beaconsfield)

(see more on page 13)

Too Many Irons in the Fire? – Annette's Story

I have been in Al-Anon since 1988. I was married to an alcoholic but did not see that I had a problem until he became violent after drinking whisky, and when I found out that he was unfaithful.

We had two young children and I began to have a lot of problems through fear and anxiety. The Al-Anon meetings were very helpful, and I was relieved when he agreed to leave me. It was better for the children, who have now grown up well balanced, and with understanding of the problems of alcoholism. They remain affectionately close to me, though living independently.

I continued to attend the same Al-Anon group that I still stay close to today and I found a sponsor, who helped me to understand how to work through the Twelve Steps. During that time I was able to run my own cleaning business to support my family.

I have always been creative and artistic, and when the opportunity came, I decided to study floristry. I was then offered the chance of running a garden centre.

It all went well for a time, but I had 'too many irons in the fire' and I slipped off the Al-Anon programme… The economic downturn caused a serious decline in business, and when I went back to meetings again, I was praying hard to know what the Higher Power wanted me to do. I seemed to get the answer that I should hang on, and life was very difficult for a few years as I struggled against the odds.

My sponsor was upset at my situation and suggested I should pray in a different way, not insisting to continuing along the same path, but examining my motives in hanging on doggedly to the difficult position that I was in.

It did not happen overnight, but when I changed my prayer into one of surrender, miracles began to happen.

I was shown a way to leave it all behind, and let go of my pride. In due time, an opportunity has come about with an offer to do the work I really love, concentrating on floristry alone.

Now, my life is less fraught with anxiety and hardship and I have an opportunity to follow my real calling. I continue to work the programme day by day, attend my meeting and am truly grateful for the help I receive, asking in turn that I may be helpful to others.

from an interview with Annette

Isolation

Isolation has been a big feature of my life. Between the ages of about 7 to 15 we lived in a small village a long way from my school so there was very little opportunity to socialise, and we were also socially isolated where we lived, not really getting to know the local children.

I think isolation is a big feature of the disease of alcoholism. I remember when I was 14 or 15 years old, I made a conscious decision to be on my own. This now strikes me as very sad. At a time when friendships should have been deepening and new friendships evolving, I chose to be alone and consciously cut myself off from others. I remember thinking to myself ' I just want to be alone'.

Linked in with isolation is the concept of shame, because I think I chose to isolate myself to protect me from feeling ashamed, from people trying to get close and seeing close into me. What I thought they would see, I don't really know, but I think as a child it is easy to act like a sponge and absorb the emotions around you, so I wasn't just experiencing my own shame, but the shame of my parents and my siblings. This is a big burden.

Many other decisions have led to isolation, I have never stayed in any job for any length of time, maybe due to a sense of moving on before people see who I am.

Coming to Al-Anon has been an important part of my healing journey. Meetings are safe in their structure, so it is a less threatening step to take than it might be in another context, but it still has the power to reach through the wall of isolation around each person. In a safe environment, it gives an opportunity to share very private thoughts and emotions, sometimes for the very first time.

This can reach deep into the shame that isolation can seek to protect, shine a light on it, and reveal it to be something that is much less shameful than often feared. Sometimes I find real humour at this moment which is also a part of the power of the programme puncturing and dissolving the grip of the emotion that is being shared and in this way letting it go.

In Al-Anon, I try to share my experience, strength and hope, as well as listen with care to others. In this way I can reach around the room and be part of the creation of a community of experience that not only breaks down the walls of my sense of isolation, but even reaches across the boundary of isolation that so many who come to Al-Anon bring with them and that is such a feature of this disease.

Elaine, South West

OVERHEARD AT A MEETING

We are not here to see through each other,
we're here to see each other through

Enlightenment and Action
(Or how not to be a Martyr)

Our guide was telling us that in every pack there is an Alpha wolf– the 'top dog', and an Omega wolf– the one who comes last in everything. I felt sad and uneasy when my husband and children turned as one, to look at me with pitying smiles!

After I had joined Al-Anon, and some time afterwards, I shared the following situation with my group:

"There were four chops to be served, and one of them was extra special –large and succulent, with a piece of kidney attached. I put it on my plate! The family spoke in unison, saying: "That was the best one, Mum!! " To which I replied: "yes, I know, and from now on, I am having my fair share of the best things too!"

Thank you Al-Anon for the wonderful programme and group sharing! With your help I am not the Omega creature in our family any more! ***Anon***

Service

For me the path to recovery has been a long, slow process. Where I have seen the most progress -- as least that I can recognize -- is from doing service.

When I first started chairing meetings I felt that it was my responsibility to make certain that the meeting was a "good" meeting. Now I know that all I need to do is start and stop the meeting on time, keep it progressing according to the meeting script, and make certain to welcome the newcomers.

I am now perfectly comfortable simply reading the meeting script without any changes or embellishments. I also learned that when I sign up for a service commitment I am committing to making certain that it gets done, and that doesn't always mean by me.

While I would like to fulfill the responsibility as often as I can, there are times when I cannot. In those instances I just need to make certain that I find someone else to fill in. As a district treasurer one member complained about the time that it was taking me to deposit cheques that were given to me by the meetings. At first I was extremely uncomfortable with the thought that someone was unhappy with me, but I came to accept that I was doing the job well enough, and learned to be less affected by this person's disapproval.

It takes me a long time to get comfortable with people, and by sharing the literature position for a meeting I was able to get to know a person who later became my long-time sponsor.

I have a busy life, and I cannot say that I am always pleased when I have the added responsibility of a service position. But I see how service is vital to keeping the programme running, and sometimes it is my turn to help out, even if I don't appreciate the benefits to me until later. ***J-P, Oxford***

Sponsorship

This is a subject that is sometimes glossed over in Al-Anon. Sponsorship is considered more important in AA where new members are needing support in order to remain sober, or struggling to get sober. Their families may believe that sobriety will put everything right.

When I came to Al-Anon, I didn't think I needed any help. As far as I was concerned, all my life's problems were other people's fault. They had made me unhappy and troubled, and caused my life to be in a mess at the age of 35. I was Twelve Stepped by someone very wise, who could plainly see that Al-Anon would help me.

At the first meeting that I went to, unwillingly, I found a dozen people who were working at taking responsibility for their own lives. They were working the same Twelve Step programme, which I had mistakenly thought was only for alcoholics!

It was a kind of 'Spiritual Awakening', and with the help of my new sponsor, I worked

through the Steps, as I continue to do. For me, the programme is a lifetime's journey, and full of good friendships, laughter and happy days on the way.

T.D. Home Counties

Amanda's Al-Anon'isms'

It's no laughing matter

Let's face it, recovery is a serious business. We meet, share, read, pray - all with our focus on working the Steps and living a better and more fulfilled life. So why is it then, that in some meetings the person sharing, although describing an event that really troubled them, will start smiling, and before we know it the whole room is laughing? Could it be that part of the wonder of recovery is the ability to laugh at ourselves, and for others to laugh along with us? I know that some of the things I've experienced, when retold, really do sound like they're from a sitcom. Perhaps like the time, pre Al-Anon, when I was so angry I stormed out of a room and slammed the door, only to have it bounce back open at me. Of course I felt I had no option but to make my dramatic exit, so I slammed it again, and then a third time, only to have that door bounce open each time. Even I was laughing at that point - especially when I realised that the problem was the child safety guard at the top of the door. Perhaps the advertising for the product should add that it's also effective for women in their 40s.

Could you repeat that?

Have you ever noticed that in Al-Anon there are some things that are too good to be said just the once.

"First things first" … the tricky question of timing. As newcomers we've all had the

same questions. How will I know who to ask to sponsor me, what will help me to work my Steps, when will I know I'm ready? The answer: **"You'll know when you know".** Astonishingly it's true.

There's also the reassuringly sensible **"Live and let live",** which is a good thing really, however judgemental, or just plain murderous, as we may have felt at times.

One of my favourites however, is **"If nothing changes, nothing changes"**. Say it slowly, pause for a while in the middle, and let the thought settle.

Amanda (Area 6 - Beaconsfield)

Alateen at Southern National Convention

September 2014 at Hayling Island.

"Recovery, Service and Unity."

The Alateen part of the weekend opened with a fun "Getting to Know You Meeting". There were Closed Alateen Meetings and a big Open Meeting where the Alateens sat on the platform and fully ran their own Alateen Meeting. Alateens shared at Joint Platforms and Al-Anon Meetings and read at the Spiritual Meeting. The final Alateen Meeting was "How has Alateen helped you?"

The Alateen Meeting Room wall was decorated with 'five minute' drawings by the Alateens on Recovery, Service and Unity, the triangle and circle, and Gratitude. We also had newly made Slogans by the Al-Anon Convenor.

Some of the Alateens who attended have Home Alateen Groups. Others just manage to attend Alateen Meetings at Conventions. Some had been before and some were Newcomers and received lovely Newcomer Packs in coloured envelopes made up by the Alateens on Friday afternoon.

We had two Registered Alateen Group Sponsors at each Alateen Meeting at the Convention which is the same requirement for the Alateen Group Meetings.

Being an Alateen Group Sponsor is a rewarding Service position. If you are over 21 years of age, have been in Al-Anon for over three years, and not also a member of AA you could chat to your Sponsor and/or an Alateen Group Sponsor about being screened. The next step would be to phone GSO on the Admin Line for further details 020 7593 2070.

Mary McG –Alateen Convenor, Southern National Convention.

The Serenity Prayer

I have been a member of Al-Anon for 10 years or more. So far, my time with Al-Anon has been spent usefully working on myself – becoming the person I should have been, and not the person I had become.

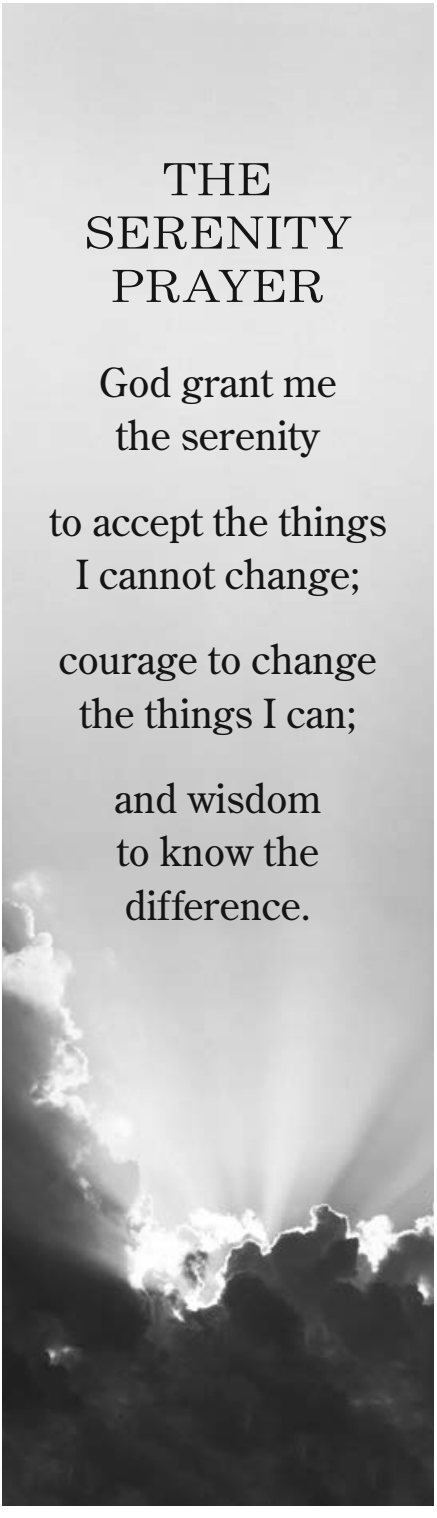
The first big decision I took was to leave my alcoholic partner. It was too much for me to watch this person slowly killing himself with alcohol. The kind, clever, hardworking person I fell in love with, had turned into a monster. It meant giving up my house, friends, financial security and nice life style.

Throughout the time since then, Al-Anon has been my constant partner. Support came to me from Al-Anon, plus open AA meetings. My sponsor and meetings in both fellowships enabled me to move on. It has been the hardest challenge in life I have had – being honest with myself has been more than pain at times!

I am now out the other side, and can look back at the unhealthy way I lived my life. My attitude to other people has changed for the better. Al-Anon is in my life, every minute of every day I try to do my best to work the programme. Nowadays Al-Anon is my constant 'bible'. As my job is now fostering children, the Twelve Steps are even more important. I believe they can work for us all!

To new members: "Welcome to our Fellowship! You don't need years of experience, just a touch of self-honesty – and BE GOOD TO YOURSELVES! Use the Serenity Prayer, if its words don't make sense, it doesn't matter – repeating them over and over again says it all, and will surely give you your answers.

With gratitude to Al-Anon! ***Chris***



Statement of Purpose

Al-Anon's Suggested Preamble to The Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope, in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness, and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

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The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.